

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 10-27 are pending. Claims 1-8 and 21-27 were allowed.

The applicants appreciate the indication that claims 13-15 and 17-20 are directed to allowable subject matter. The claims are not being placed in independent form because claims 12 and 16, from which claims 13-15 and 17-20 respectively depend, are in condition for allowance as explained below.

The undersigned attorney would also like to thank the Examiner for the thoroughness and fairness of the entire examination of this case. The examination could serve as an excellent tutorial to all examiners. This is not something that I've ever written before in my 15+ years of practice.

Claims 10-12 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,275,960 to Cappelletti et al. ("Cappelletti").

Cappelletti does not anticipate claims 10-12 and 16 because Cappelletti is not prior art. Cappelletti was issued from a U.S. application filed on December 16, 1998. The present application claims priority from European Application No. 98203302.9, which was filed on September 30, 1998. Enclosed is an accurate English translation of that European priority application, a certified copy of which was filed on August 11, 1999. As a result, the applicants have perfected the priority claim back to the September 20, 1998 filing date of the European priority application, and thus, Cappelletti is not prior art. Accordingly, claims 10-12 and 16 are in condition for allowance.

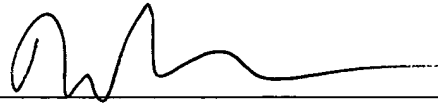
The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

Application No. 09/265,119
Reply to Office Action dated October 26, 2004

All of the claims remaining in the application are now clearly allowable.
Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure:

Postcard

Statement of Translator

English Translation of European Priority Application

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